

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 NA/A

TAGS: PFOR, CI, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN REACTION TO CHILEAN COUP

1. NIGERIAN PRESS HAS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO CHILEAN COUP, WITH EDITORIALS AND COLUMNISTS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT EXTERNAL PRESSURES FROM USG AND/OR US-BASED MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO ALLENDE'S DOWNFALL. ALLENDE SEEN VARIOUSLY AS "HAPLESS VICTIM OF PERFIDIOUS AND SELF-SERVING DESIGNS OF TODAY'S BIG POWERS," OF "OVERT AND COVERT IMPERIALIST SABOTAGE," AND OF "CONSPIRACY OF AMERICAN BIG BUSINESS WITH IMPLACABLE RIGHT-WING IN CHILE." ACCORDING ONE WRITER, "US COULD NOT TOLERATE SOCIALISM IN ITS SO-CALLED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE," WHILE TIMES SAYS "ALLEGED ROLE OF US IS DEPLORABLE" BECAUSE OF OUR PRESUMED FAILURE TO "FROWN ON" COUP OF WHICH WE THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD ADVANCE NOTICE.

2. PRESS ALSO DRAWS LOCALLY APPLICABLE LESSONS FROM CHILEAN EXPERIENCE. ONE COLUMNIST ATTRIBUTES CHILEAN
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DRAMA TO ALLENDE'S OWN SHORTCOMINGS, AND CALLS "FAILED EXPERIMENT" IN CHILE "TRAGEDY OF LIBERAL AND INTELLECTUAL

IDEALIST IN POLITICS." ANOTHER WRITER NOTED ALLENDE'S ATTEMPT INSURE STABILITY BY INCLUDING MILITARY OFFICERS IN GOVERNMENT, AND DRAWS CONCLUSION THAT MILITARY-CIVILIAN DIARCHY NOT VISABLE SOLUTION. NEARLY ALL PAPERS ALSO SEE CHILEAN EVENTS AS LESSON TO ENTIRE WORLD THAT SMALL NATIONS REMAIN AT MERCY OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE FROM MAJOR POWERS AND EVEN FROM LARGE FOREIGN-CONTROLLED FIRMS.

3. NO OFFICIAL COMMENT EXPECTED FROM FMG, THOUGH TENOR OF VIEWS HELD PRIVATELY BY FMG OFFICIALS EVIDENT FROM MEA AMERICAN DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR'S POINTED QUESTION, "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ALLENDE?" HE ACCEPTED FACTUAL DESCRIPTION OF CHILEAN SITUATION AND US-CHILEAN RELATIONS WITH GOOD GRACE, BUT MADE NO FURTHER OBSERVATIONS TO SUGGEST HE WAS CONVINCED ON US NON-INVOLVEMENT IN COUP.

4. COMMENT: PRESS AND PRIVATE REACTIONS ABOUT AS ANTICIPATED, REFLECTING AND PRESUMABLY REINFORCING FUNDAMENTAL NIGERIAN BELIEF THAT OUTSIDE POWERS AND INFLUENCES -- IN THIS CASE THOUGHT TO BE USG AND AMERICAN COMPANIES--ARE POTENTIAL THREATS TO SMALL COUNTRIES AND SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESERVE AND SUSPICION.
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